

An Absolute Masterpiece!

While browsing the Brookfield Barnes & Noble, we found the Criterion Collection's release of Guillermo del Toro's 2022 version of Pinocchio.

This is the fourth movie version of Pinocchio that I'm familiar with (though there are *many more!*): The Disney version (1940) (we all know how good that one is); the Italian one where Roberto Benigni plays *Pinocchio* (2002) (that didn't work out very well) (but I still consider Benigni a genius); the Italian one where Roberto Benigni plays *Gepetto* (2019) (that one is worth seeing); and finally...

Guillermo del Toro's version. In my view, an absolute masterpiece, suitable for the whole family.

I had this on my Netflix "to be watched" list for months, but never got around to it. I'm *glad*, because buying the Criterion blu-ray also got me several special features, like a 44-minute documentary on making the film. Just watching the main film, I got the impression that no corners were cut; that its creation was *enormously* time-and-labor intensive. Watching the "making of" documentary made that even more evident.

If you're not familiar with stop-motion animation, the essential process is: 1) Set up the models of characters in their settings; 2) Run over to the camera



Yes, a bird's bones are hollow; its entire body weight is minimal. But it still weighs something, as this one is about to learn.



A gesture that successfully conveys the joy and laughter in (most of) this film.
— Images accompanying this article from IMDB.com

and take one photo; 3) Run over to the character(s) and move them slightly; repeat these steps many thousands of times.

(Remember Jason and the Argonauts from 1963? Remember that 7-headed hydra? Just imagine how carefully Ray Harryhausen had to keep track of the movement of each head and snake-like neck as he moved the model in the above steps.)

The Criterion

Collection box also contains a well-illustrated booklet.

I'm not a big musical person (we stopped watching Woody Allen's *Everyone Says I Love You* after about 20 minutes), but I really like the singing in this film, especially Pinocchio singing

**"What do you call it? call it?
What do you do with it? with it?
I love it! I love it!"**

as he dances (somewhat destructively) around Gepetto's workshop on first coming to life.

The story line differs somewhat from other versions you may have seen.

Parts of it are a little dark. A little scary, in part because del Toro



Guillermo del Toro with some of the movie's characters.

placed the film in a World War II Italian fascism setting (which makes possible several good points for children of all ages). And the story deals with loss through death.

But generally, it's kid-friendly, with some happy and sad real-life themes. "Life is the journey. Love is the reward." That blurb on one movie poster version is very appropriate.

The movie is still currently on Netflix.



Japanese poster.



The excellent "making of" documentary on this Criterion Collection home video gives a good idea of the incredible amount of work that goes into stop-motion animation like this.

And Here's Another Great Movie!

Here's what often happens with movies around our place.

- I read about a movie in one of the many film-related magazines I buy.

- If I think it sounds interesting, I add it to a "want list" of films.

- A film title could be on the list months or longer when I finally add it to an online order I'm placing with Barnes & Noble.

- When received, the DVD/Blu-Ray gets added to my ever-growing backlog.

- A film could be in my "to be watched backlog for months or longer before I finally view it.

Because of the time that passes in the above steps, I sometimes think, watching the opening credits, "I have *no idea* what this movie is about."

And I *like it* that way.

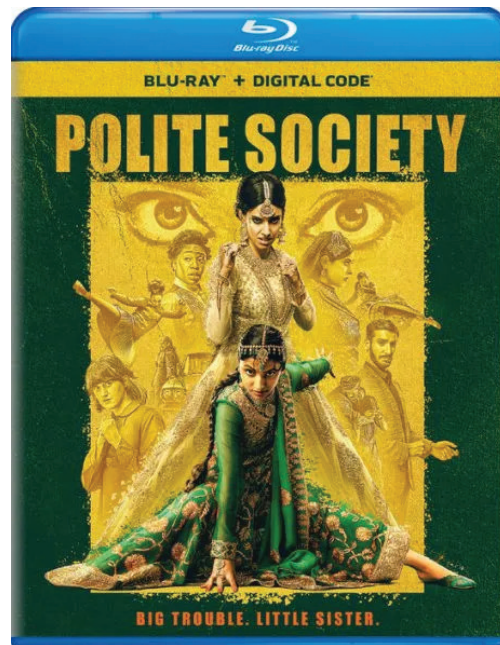
Look at the Blu-Ray cover image of *Polite Society*. You now know as much as I knew/remembered about it, when I started watching.

But if you want to know more about it, OK, I understand.

Ria is a teenage girl of Indian descent living in London. She aspires to be a stuntwoman. A poster of real-life stuntwoman Eunice Huthart hangs on her bedroom wall.

Ria's older sister, Lena, just dropped out of art school.

The girls' parents are nice enough, but they



both consider the daughters' passions (stuntwork and art) to be foolish. They should aspire to be doctors or lawyers, and above all—they should be actively *seeking husbands*.

Lena does meet a very eligible bachelor, Salim. They're engaged. They'll be moving far away after the wedding.

The approaching loss of her sister traumatizes Ria. She fantasizes that Salim is performing sinister experiments on Lena. She imagines Salim's mother is part of the evil plan to do... *something evil...* to Lena.

But at one point in the movie, you'll ask yourself, "Hey, wait. Ria's fantasies. *Are* they fantasies? Or is Salim's evil plan *really happening?*"

The movie is full of laughs, action, music, dancing, snappy dialogue, and just plain fun. I laughed constantly during my first viewing (and will certainly watch it again).

Polite Society is not appropriate for young children. The teenagers in this film talk like teenagers, and think about the kinds of things teenagers think about... if you get my drift (or are you snowed?).

Watching this film, I had a very un-woke thought that I hesitate... nah, I don't care, people on both sides of the "political spectrum" will be offended, I'm sure, so what the heck. Blow your stacks, all of you; I don't care. I thought how some people believe it



Lots of flying-in-the-air, spinning, screaming, knuckle-pounding, gluteus-maximus-kicking, fist-flailing, elbow-jabbing, knee-thrusting action. (And that's just the *dialogue!* Wait till you get a load of the *physical action!*) — Images accompanying this article from IMDB.com

was pure evil for England to have “colonized” India, imposing her Royal Will on this country, etc., etc., etc. But there are some who believe that specific “colonization” was not an entirely bad thing, as history turned out. Now, this film displays the results of a different kind of “colonization” resulting from people of Indian descent moving to England. Some people see negative results from *uncontrolled* immigration, and conclude (I believe, mistakenly) that *all* immigration



A lovely wedding dance. The precursor to violent justice.



Imagine this is a superhero team. What to call them? Perhaps, “Misfits, Inc.”? Who needs mutant powers when you have this kind of ingenious ferocity firing your engines?

should be stopped. But I believe any honest person will see that people like Ria, her sister, and her family *greatly improve* any country they choose to live in, when *proper* immigration standards and practices are in place.

This film is available on DVD, if you don’t have a Blu-Ray player.

“Big trouble. Little sister.”

I saw that blurb on the box after I saw the movie, and laughed out loud. *Very appropriate!*